

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN EL SALVADOR'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Moscow LATINSKAYA AMERIKA in Russian No 11, Nov 86 pp 28-34

[Article by Sybille Bachmann (GDR): "El Salvador: Believers in the Liberation Struggle"]

[Text] In the last two decades believers have taken an increasingly active part in the anti-imperialist struggle of the Latin American peoples. This tendency has been clearly manifested in the revolutionary processes characteristic of Central America. In particular, its reflection is found in the words of the Jesuit priest, Juan Fernandez Pico, which were uttered in connection with the victory of the Sandinist revolution: "Now ..there is no other way to find Jesus than on the path to revolution." [1]

In the 60's the most varied movements and organizations of Christians with leftist convictions arose throughout the region. This phenomenon was manifested most vividly in the emergence and development of the Christian base communities (CEB's), which spread to El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras, as well as to certain regions of Brazil and Peru. At the same time it had its own particular characteristics in each of these countries. In El Salvador, for example, in the late 50's and early 60's these communities resulted from the exacerbation of social contradictions as a result of the imposition of a new model of capitalist development upon the country. In the course of industrialization there was a rapid a pauperization and proletarianization of a large section of the peasantry, as well as rapid growth in the marginal urban strata of the population. Unemployment in the city and countryside, low incomes for the working people, constant growth in the cost of living, and the housing crisis, on the one hand, and on the other, the repressive, anti-people rule of the land-owning oligarchy, which was associated with commercial capital and the military elite--that is the social-economic and political context in which the awakening of the popular masses began.

The CEB's arose mainly among the believing population of the countryside and the semi-proletarian masses of the city. For the peasants and agricultural workers uprooted from their usual environment and the urban marginals they became new forms for joint existence and adaptation under the crisis conditions of Salvadoran society.

The majority of the CEB's grew out of the so-called "meditation circles," in which Bible reading was accompanied by a discussion of concrete social questions. In these both believers and priests somehow acquired a new language and a new understanding of the sense of life, which was embodied in the ideals of "liberation theology." In many cases this led to the growth of political activity. For example, the conclusions drawn from the command to love thy neighbor gave rise to new forms of solidarity among the oppressed segment of believers and turned them toward a more radical struggle for their own interests.

On this basis politically-active Christian organizations began to arise in the early 70's. They included the National Union of Catholic Workers and a section of it called the Salvadoran Christian Peasants Federation (FECCAS), which was formed in 1968; the Farm Workers Union (UTC), created in 1973 in the parish of Toluca; and the workers trade union FESTRAS. At the same time new initiatives and movements aimed at changing the social order arose in the communities themselves.

When the local reaction rejected any reforms--even the most moderate ones--FECCAS and UTC joined together and, along with one of the factions of the United Popular Action Front (FAPU, created in 1972), became part of the Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), which was founded on 30 July 1975. FECCAS and UTC declared their independence from the official church, announced that they were unaffiliated with any particular religion and came out in favor of an alliance of workers and peasants under the hegemony of the proletariat. [2]

The need to strengthen the solidarity of the popular masses led--for the first time in Latin American history--to the unification (in August 1980) of Salvadoran CEB's under the leadership of the National Coordinating Committee of the People's Church (CONIP). CONIP understands the concept of the "people's church" as adherence to the principle of "choice in favor of the poor," which at the 2d General Congress of the Latin American Council of Bishops in Medellin (1968) was declared to come closest to the genuine ideals of Christianity.

In addition to CONIP, the Salvadoran Ecumenical Committee (CES) was formed in July 1980 by Christian organizations and those under their influence. At the end of January 1981 the CES merged with the Ecumenical Committee of Humanitarian Aid (CEAH). This led to the emergence of the Salvadoran Ecumenical Association of Humanitarian Aid and Service (ASESAH). ASESAH, which brings together Catholics and Protestants, sets itself the goal of "...serving and helping the suffering population... on the basis of loyalty to the teaching of Jesus." [3]

The CEB's [not further identified] played a significant role in uniting the Salvadoran popular masses, especially the non-proletarian strata. Further, as a result of broad contact with other democratic, as well as revolutionary organizations, including the RDF-FNOFM [not further identified], they helped to overcome the social passivity of the believers, by instilling in them a desire to struggle and a feeling of solidarity and courage; at the same time they themselves shifted to more radical positions in the course of the civil

war. The following opinion expressed by one Salvadoran priest is typical: "The defense of our life, our land and our people cannot be a sinful matter because no other way exists. In this case it is an obligation. It would be a sin to watch them kill our brothers and not defend them." [4] Many priests of the sect stated that they were able to realize themselves as individuals only when participating in the struggle of the armed people's organizations.

The growing movement of the masses also exerted an influence on the higher church hierarchy of El Salvador, and in particular Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero. The son of a telegraph operator, he graduated from the Papal Grigorian University in Rome, where candidates for high church positions receive training. Before he was ordained an archbishop (on 3 February 1977) he was considered a close "Opus Dei" priest, immersed exclusively in the study of theological problems, in other words, someone closer to the ruling classes than to the people. [5] However, his appointment coincided with the failure of agrarian reform and the growth of the repression which touched even priests, and reached its culmination after the 12 March 1977 murder of Father Rutilio Grande. This crime profoundly shook the Salvadoran church and marked the beginning of changes in the thought of Archbishop Romero, who had been a close friend of R. Grande. The basis of his position was the "choice in favor of the poor," declared in Medellin. Moreover he went further than the decisions of Puebla (where the 3d Conference of the Council of Latin American Bishops took place in 1979), defining the poor strata of the population as the majority of the nation, and considering them not as the sum of individuals, but as a single community of people. He recognized the antagonism of the conflicts between the poor and the oligarchy, the existence of the class struggle both within society, as well as within the church itself. [6] And while originally the archbishop opposed the activities of the people's organizations and the CEB's, the dialectics of the struggle led him to a recognition of their important role, and later to rapprochement and cooperation with them. He also came to recognize the need for a scientific analysis of the development of society. While accepting the communists as valuable participants in the social dialog, he thought at the same time that "liberation theology" could become the answer to the social problems posed by Marxism-Leninism.

The evolution of his worldview made it possible for Archbishop Romero to understand the priests involved with the CEB's. He imposed upon himself the obligation to arouse the consciousness of Christians and their feeling of responsibility on the and to appeal to the conscience of all Salvadorans. Three types of his pastoral appeals (later used by the CONIP) served this purpose: they were later used by the appeals to the masses, appeals to the CEB's and the so-called additional pastoral messages. [7] Thanks to the radiostation belonging to the church, the archbishop's sermons reached up to 73 percent of the rural and 43 percent of the urban population of the country. Approximately 4,000 believers went to hear him at the capital's cathedral every Sunday.

Although he believed in the the need to create democracy in the interests of the people, Archbishop Romero did not exclude the possibility of building a socialist society. [8] It is true that he never clarified his attitude toward this question, although in the fourth pastoral message he pointed out that

some of the popular masses consider Marxism-Leninism to be a possible political strategy in the struggle for power and that this fact demands recognition. [9]

The evolution of O. Romero's views on the question of violence is interesting. In May 1977 the Archbishop decisively rejected it as means of resolving the existing problems and expressed the opinion that revolution would also mean the subversion of order. However, as early as spring 1978 he was forced to recognize the people's right to violence in response to violence: "Church doctrine in the most extreme case recognizes rebellion if war is the last means for the defense of good." [10] In this regard, he made an appeal to the government's soldiers (on 23 March 1980) to put an end to the fratricidal carnage. It said: "...You yourselves came from our people, but you are killing your brother peasants. However, the commandment of the Lord's 'Thou shalt not kill' must triumph over the order to kill a man. Not one soldier is obligated to violate an order which contradicts the commandment of the Lord... In the name of the Lord and also in the name of the suffering people, whose cries to Heaven become louder and louder with each passing day, I appeal to you, I order you in the name of God: cease the repression." [11]

The next day, March 24, 1980, Archbishop Romero died from the reactionaries' bullets.

Although a majority of the Salvadoran bishops moved to the side of counterrevolution after this murder, the people's struggle became increasingly powerful. Under these conditions the new archbishop, N. Rivera-i-Damas, appointed only three years later in early 1983, expressed himself in favor of "humanism and modernized capitalism" and he took up an intermediate position. He defined the church's place in the following manner: "The role of the church in the given conflict is to serve the people and preserve their essence. It must not be on the side of the government nor on the side of the revolutionaries." [12]

Over the course of many years Rivera-i-Damas, although he supported O. Romero, had worked in Catholic Social Action--an organization with a democratic Christian orientation and close ties to the Christian Democratic Party which rules today. The Salvadoran Bishops Conference [13] also exerted a strong influence on Rivera-i-Damas in order to force him to make a final break with the ideas of "choice in favor of the poor" and to reject the exposure of the repression being committed by the ultra-rightists and the Duarte government. Nonetheless, he continued to fight for human rights and to oppose the terror and foreign intervention. It is for precisely this reason that "Death squads" and the so-called Christian Traditional Movement threatened the archbishop with death. The threats increased after he took it upon himself to act as mediator in two meetings between guerrilla and government representatives, which took place in La Palma and Ayagualo in October and November 1984 respectively.

Having lost support in church circles, Romero's supporters faced a choice: go into exile or move closer to the people and their struggle. For those who preferred the latter course, this meant joining military organizations of

revolutionaries, in which they continued to fulfill the duties of a priest or they fought with a rifle in their hands.

It should be noted that the mass revolutionary organizations, especially those created in the 70's, did not immediately recognize the significance and potential of the CEB's for the development of the revolutionary process. However, they soon understood that it was possible to lead the revolutionary movement to victory only if they derived their support from an alliance with the masses of believers and their communities. One of the manifestos of the United Revolutionary Leadership says: "The Salvadoran people are proud of the new church which allies itself with their cause and which has been created by priests who joined with the archbishop, who became a victim of the reaction. We are confident that the new church and all Christians who are faithful to the basic principles of their religion will fight staunchly and will remain with the people until the end." [14]

The Salvadoran Christians themselves explain their participation in the revolutionary struggle and their attitude toward the prospects for social change in the following manner: "For us today the building of the bases of socialism is an historical choice and a concrete alternative, which more than anything else brings us closer to the kingdom of God...We CEB Christians think that building socialism means the creation of an economy which is based on public ownership of the means of production and the results of labor, which will ensure first of all the satisfaction of the basic needs of all Salvadorans: the need for work, bread, health care, education, housing, etc. We think that building socialism also means the restoration of the people's culture and their spiritual values...to support this process, while participating in it, means to love the Lord God, to bring his kingdom closer and to purify our faith, transforming it into a people's religion, while returning to it its true nature and content." [15]

At the same time the process of coming together was for the "people's church" and the revolutionary organizations, including Marxist-Leninist ones, a lengthy one, fraught with difficulties arising not so much from ideological disagreements as from concrete problems which resulted from Salvadoran political reality and the search for means to resolve them. In order to better understand this it should be noted that CONIP, in the opinion of its founders, "...is not a political organization. For this reason it cannot identify itself with any party. It strives to be a church of the poor in El Salvador." At the same time CONIP does not ban CEB members from joining political associations. In fact, it requires community members to participate in the people's struggle through various political associations. For example, CONIP has worked out special principles according to which CEB members can work together or join people's organizations. [16] This exerts a definite influence both on the placement and the fate of the political parties. An example of this, and moreover a positive one, is the split in the Christian Democratic Party and the creation of the leftist Social-Christian People's Movement, which joined the RDF--FNOFM.

The CONIP activities, especially in its contacts with FNOFM, led to the conclusion of an agreement between the committee and the command organs of the

Front on questions of coordinating their activities in the work with the population of the liberated regions. Later the CONIP became part of the RDF and recognized the RDF-FNOFM as the vanguard of the revolution. The priests, who joined the armed people's organizations, continue to be conscious of themselves as part of the church, but they subordinate themselves to revolutionary discipline. Some of them joined the guerrilla struggle as fighters, having temporarily ceased to fulfill their duties as leaders of a religious sect. Similar changes in the convictions of priests--especially after the murder of Archbishop Romero--took place on a broader scale in El Salvador than was the case in Nicaragua in the period of the anti-Somoza struggle.

The active participation of Christians in the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle and their important role in the alliance of liberation forces is a characteristic feature of the Salvadoran revolutionary process. The specific contribution of believers to the mobilization, organization and unification of the national liberation forces has enormous significance in those countries and regions of the world where religious consciousness is a very important component of the community, where the formation of modern social structures has not been completed and the traditional ones are undergoing a crisis, where the industrial proletariat is only beginning to take shape and its political consciousness is in the formational stage.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Fe cristiana y Revolucion Sandinista en Nicaragua." Managua. 1979, p 62.
2. ESTUDIO CENTROAMERICANOS. San Salvador, No 359, 1979, p 777.
3. INFORMACION CATOLICA IBEROAMERICANA. Vol 1, No 237, 1981.
4. "Documento CONIP. Serie: Testimonios." Vol 1, s.a., No 2, p 9.
5. "Monsenor Romero: Martir de la Iglesia Popular." San Jose, 1980, p 25.
6. O.A. Romero. "Su Pensamiento." San Salvador, 1980, p 17.
7. "La voz de los sin voz." San Salvador, 1980, p 159.
8. Ibid., p 436.
9. Ibid., pp 159-160.
10. O.A. Romero. Op. cit., p 179.
11. Homilia del 23 March 1980.
12. UNO MAS UNO. Mexico, 1 April 1982, pp 1, 17.

13. It should be noted that in its struggle against the CEB's and priests who had allied themselves with the people, the CEDES found protection in the Vatican.
14. "Manifiesto de la Direccion Revolucionaria Unificada de las organizaciones politico-militares al Pueblo Salvadoreno, a los pueblos centroamericanos y del Mundo." San Salvador, May, 1980.
15. "CONIP; Historia, fundamentacion teologica y problematica de la Iglesia Popular de El Salvador." Vol 1, Noviembre de 1980, p 6.
16. "CONIP Internacional." Vol 1, s.a., pp 12-13.

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LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

MEXICAN SOCIALIST PARTY FIGURE INTERVIEWED

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[Interview with Eduardo Gonzalez, member of the CC Political Committee of the United Socialist Party of Mexico (USPM), interviewer, date and place not specified: "The Threat to Sovereignty and Our Tasks"]

[Text] [Question] I would like to start with this question: how acute is the foreign debt problem for the country?

[Answer] The situation in which Mexico finds itself today is unprecedented. And the fact that you ask me that question at the beginning of our conversation is fully understandable. The economy is experiencing stagnation. In the last two years the gross national product has not increased, and there are signs suggesting that this economic situation will continue in the coming five-year period. There is a growing rate of inflation, which is out of control. It is predicted, for example, that this year the prices for consumer goods will double. At the same time the total amount of the positive balance from foreign trade is not enough to pay the interest on the foreign debt. The country is close to bankruptcy. The number of unemployed has reached nearly 3.5 million, i.e., 15 percent of the able-bodied population. Their numbers increase by 800,000 annually. For the most part these are young people. And the worst of it is that the foreign debt prevents Mexico from implementing any kind of serious program to overcome the economic difficulties.

Nothing similar has ever taken place. It is true that we experienced times of crisis both in 1976 and in 1982. But now we do not have even the minimal conditions to propose anything like a solution and at the same time to repay the debt. The government is suggesting the prospect (if one can call it that) of maintaining the economy at the same level, i.e., for all intents and purposes at the level of the breakdown.

That is why we favor a decisive re-examination of the foreign debt question. What would such a re-examination mean? It would mean an end to the outflow of currency to pay interest amounting to 8 percent of the GNP.

Within the government there are two viewpoints or two approaches. The essence of the first consists of giving Mexico some breathing space and an opportunity to hold out over a short period of time through, for example, a special

credit. According to the second viewpoint a deferment of interest payments is essential. In the present political conditions, both foreign as well as domestic, it seems as though a solution somewhere in-between will be found.

And what are these conditions? First of all, there is the position of the creditors, i.e., the American government, international financial centers, the IMF, and private banks. What they propose is for the most part a somewhat modified model of the "Baker plan." In fact, we are talking about a reduction in the state sector of the economy, the further weakening of control over prices and the liberalization of the currency exchange system. In short, we are talking about measures aimed at a sharp reduction in the state regulation of the economy.

They demand that we change our attitude toward foreign capital investment and create in essence a regime favorable to foreign business, and they also require changes in the legislation regulating the activity of the multinational monopolies operating in Mexico.

Further, the proposals of the creditors include points of a political, even a fundamental nature: in the first place, they concern Mexican foreign policy, especially in Central America, and in the second place, they concern our electoral system. It is perfectly clear that there is a desire to weaken the role and influence of the government in the resolution of the Central American conflict. As an active participant in the Contadora group, Mexico makes it difficult for the USA to carry out its interventionist plans in this zone. The second aspect is related to the desire to impose upon Mexico a two-party electoral system corresponding to the concept of "citizens make policy and not public organizations." In other words, those kinds of parties which would express the interests of particular groups of citizens would suit the creditors.

At the negotiations on the foreign debt issue, the Mexican government invariably displays a desire to achieve guarantees for the protection of its political and economic strategy. But, after all, it is time to recognize that the modernization plans proposed by President Miguel de la Madrid three years ago have failed on the main point; stabilization of the economy within two years has not taken place. This calls into question the government's strategy. However, it seems that the government has decided to take any and all steps in an attempt to continue its policy of modernizing industry and agriculture, and of re-organizing the state apparatus... with the goal of raising Mexico to the current world level. But the problem is that other participants in the negotiations do not want to make any concessions when the discussion concerns Mexico's sovereign policy, both foreign as well as domestic.

In this entire picture there is one great factor missing, and that is the people of Mexico. As a result, political phenomena which I see as new are now letting themselves be known, especially in the middle strata of society.

[Question] What do they consist of?

[Answer] In the dissatisfaction which is already being expressed in political sentiments. Unfortunately, they are more reactionary than progressive in nature. They have manifested themselves with particular force in the northern part of the country and they have spread within the middle strata, who are attracted by the American model of development. These sentiments are also manifested in politics: some of the voters give their votes to the rightist National Action Party.

What is new is that the official trade unions are to some degree moving away from the government. They have found in themselves the strength to embark on the path of criticism (formal but nonetheless criticism) of de la Madrid's economic policy.

[Question] And how does the crisis situation manifest itself at the level of the political parties, and in the positions of the Mexican left?

[Answer] Consolidation of the rightist forces has taken place under the crisis conditions. This provides evidence that the leftists are losing when they should be expanding their sphere of influence. There are several reasons for this, I think.

The development of events in Mexico refutes the frequently expressed opinion that the worse the situation the more easily people join the struggle on the side of the leftist parties. The workers, peasants and the masses in general have not moved toward the leftist organizations; they have not started to knock on their doors as some expected. Why? Because the leftist forces have not worked out a genuine alternative to the crisis, another path to the resolution of the burning questions—either for the more distant future (which involves the formulation of tasks of socialist construction) or for the present day (tasks which involve the direct struggle against the most negative, anti-people consequences of the crisis). This aspect is very important.

Another reason is that the leftists have only been participating—on a legal basis—in political life for seven years. They have little experience of legal activity in an election struggle using modern mass media. Inadequacies of an organizational nature, which have prevented them from becoming mass parties, have also played their role. At present our party has 65,000 to 70,000 members. But in the last 20 years not one leftist organization in Mexico has had more than 6,000 members. The organizational structure which is useful for a small party falls apart when the membership exceeds 10,000, and after all, in the future we must talk about hundreds of thousands.

To go on. The tactics of the USPM have been directed more to the fulfillment of ideological tasks than to the resolution of problems directly facing present-day Mexican society such as inflation, unemployment, the foreign trade deficit, a nondemocratic electoral system, relations with organs of the state apparatus or practical activities in the municipalities. We have no practical experience in these kinds of matters, and this shows that we are poorly prepared; we have not been able to utilize all the opportunities which in one form or another are granted to us even by a limited bourgeois-democratic system.

Our television appearances, for example, do not compare with bourgeois propaganda.

And, finally, the leftist forces have not been able to fully overcome what has become, unfortunately, a bitter tradition of the Mexican left—its inclination toward schism and factions. At the present time the voter going to the polls confronts a choice of five candidates who are all socialists! Looking at his ballot, it is difficult for him to determine the advantages of each one. And, incidentally, the leftists in Mexico get from 10 to 15 percent of the electorate's votes, which is not bad at all for a start. But when this 15 percent is split between five different organizations you yourself can judge the consequences...

The USPM, which has existed for four years, is an example of the desire—put into material form—to do away with this tradition. But the mere fact of our party's formation has proven to be inadequate. That is why recently we signed an agreement with nearly all the leftist organizations concerning the establishment of a united front. We are studying the experience accumulated in South America by the Peruvian Unity of Leftist Forces and the Uruguayan Broad Front, and we are learning from it. I think that in 1988 the Mexican left will go into the election with its own candidate for president. But even this year we will be represented as a unified organization at the elections to be held in some Mexican states.

[Question] Tell me, please, in more detail about the USPM.

[Answer] As the most important segment of the leftist forces, the USPM is not free of those inadequacies which are characteristic of the Mexican leftists in general. We are not yet five years old, and we have already had two splits. And while one of them hardly touched the organization, the other, in February 1985, could be called serious.

The party as a mass association is still going through a formational process and is still making a final determination of its profile as a democratic and national force. The 3d National Congress has been set for November of this year, 1986. I think that it will enable us to move forward in defining our goals and tasks and in establishing ever closer ties with the working class.

We hope that in the future we will be able to better utilize all of the accumulated experience. After all, the USPM has at its disposal experienced personnel, and the communist party has also joined it. At present the organization represents a force which has less political influence than it could have if one were judging on the basis of the "human capital" which it has accumulated. After unification, the USPM had less than 30,000 members. Today, as I have already said, it has more than 65,000. This means that the overwhelming majority of our party's members did not belong to the organizations which comprised it. And this provides evidence that if we can criticize ourselves, as well as set and meet great targets, we have excellent prospects.

[Question] What is new in Mexican-American relations?

[Answer] Our main trading partner is the USA, where a process of technological re-organization of the economy is now taking place, a process which is aimed at returning to America—at any cost—hegemony in the capitalist world. This cannot fail to affect Mexico. It is manifested not only in the area of economic ties, where the dependence of the Mexican side is most acute and extensive, but also in the U.S. offensive against Mexico. The USA is attempting to influence our domestic policy; it is attempting to "attach" us to its own international policy. Further, they want to "bring us closer" to their own political, economic and social model.

This has led to conflict between the two governments. The USA has obviously gone somewhat too far in its desire to utilize Mexico's difficult economic situation to accelerate a re-examination of American-Mexican relations.

For our part we are attempting to participate in the establishment of a broad anti-imperialist front. One result—the most important in recent months—has been the formation of the Front to Struggle for National Sovereignty. Its goal is to head up mass demonstrations by the working people. In addition, it has come to include representatives of other leftist parties and prominent progressive figures. This opens up a new field of struggle in which we are striving for the broadest possible alliances in order to oppose jointly the threat to Mexico's sovereignty.

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LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

BRITISH WORK ON LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS REVIEWED

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[Review by L.L. Klochkovskiy of book "Generals in Retreat. The Crisis of Military Rule in Latin America." Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1985, 208 pages]

[Text] In the first half of the 80's there were serious changes in the political life of Latin America which were related to the failure of military-authoritarian regimes in a number of countries and the coming to power of civilian governments. This process has become the focus of attention from very wide scholarly and public circles.

The Latin American oligarchy and apologists of international capital are trying to present the activities of the Latin American military regimes in a positive light. They advance the thesis that the establishment of military dictatorships is objectively normal; in their opinion the dictatorships are uniquely capable of creating favorable conditions for the activities of foreign capital, of ensuring the suppression of protest by the broad popular masses and of finding a way to overcome the impasse of import-replacing industrialization and to further develop capitalism both in breadth and depth.

To counter this viewpoint representatives of progressive circles are attempting to provide an objective evaluation of the period of military rule. The numerous works by Western researchers which have appeared recently often provide a realistic picture of the pernicious consequences of the activities of the military-authoritarian regimes. The work under review is one of these. It was prepared by a group of English specialists on Latin America. The authors considered their main task to consist of examining the economic strategy of the military regimes and of showing their main economic, social and political consequences. This work consists of an introductory chapter, four studies of particular countries (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Brazil) and a conclusion.

In their summary description of the military regimes in Latin America, the authors note that their social base is the elite of the bourgeoisie, which is closely related to the local oligarchy and the multinational corporations. Their activities in the economic sphere are aimed at encouraging the transnationalization of production, and their social-political activities are

aimed at depoliticizing the main social problems, excluding the masses from political life, suppressing democratic institutions, damming up channels through which people influence the government (p 4). It goes without saying that this kind of judgment on the military regimes does not mean that the authors of the collection are opponents of the bourgeois order or favor its elimination. On the contrary, they fear that the intensification of the crisis of dependent capitalist development can push the continent's peoples onto the path of fundamental, progressive social-economic transformation. They are trying to orient the ruling circles in the Latin American countries to the need to re-organize the economic and political course for the purpose of stabilizing the bases of capitalism in the region. As P. Cernack notes, "the crisis ...makes it essential to re-orient the bourgeoisie economically and politically...The task thus amounts to re-organizing capital and restructuring the system of political hegemony of the bourgeoisie" (p 28).

The military dictatorships, in the authors' opinion, cannot create a firm economic and political base for the stable development of capitalism. "A characteristic feature of the military regimes," it says in the work, "is that through repression of the popular masses they are capable of achieving success in the short term, but they are not capable of creating an institutional system which would ensure stability in the long term" (p 30).

The chapters about specific countries, although they are not all at the same level, are of undoubted interest due to the abundance of factual material and certain theoretical generalizations which are deserving of attention. The sections on Argentina and Chile are the most interesting.

The study of Argentina contains an analysis of the activity of the military governments during the period from 1966 through 1983. The intensifying political and economic crisis in this country aroused the Argentine ruling circles to embark upon a path of establishing a military dictatorship. The goal of the government of the Generals Onganía, Levingston and Lanusse (1966-1963) was, as noted in the book, "to restructure Argentine capitalism from above and to create a new system of political predominance of the ruling classes" (p 41).

However, their attempts did not bring success, which forced the military to leave the political scene. The further radicalization of the masses after the Peronists returned to power posed with ever greater acuteness the question of the path for the country's future development. "The military elite and the dominating classes," writes W. Smith, "were clearly conscious of a direct and serious threat to the stability and normal functioning of capitalism in Argentina" (p 41). Under these conditions a new military coup was carried out in 1976.

The military dictatorship made broad use of the methods of mass violence and terror to suppress the political opposition, and the democratic and workers and democratic movement. In the sphere of economics the government began to actively carry out the monetarist concepts widely propagandized by the IMF. This course stipulated a 40 percent reduction in the real wages of workers, a reduction in import duties, the elimination of export taxes on agricultural commodities, the liberalization of external financing, curtailment of the

activities of the state sector and a reduction in expenditures for social needs.

The implementation of this policy was welcomed by international monopolistic capital, which noticeably expanded the volume of external financing and investment. In general, however, the policy of an "open economy" had sharply negative consequences for the state. In Argentina a process of deindustrialization began. In 1981 industrial output fell 17 percent from the 1975 level, and its proportion of the GNP dropped from 29 percent to 22.1 percent. In certain sectors this drop was even sharper (in metallurgy it was 60 percent) (pp 67-68). The country's production capacities fell by 30 percent, while the general financial losses related to a reduction in industrial investment and the destruction of capacities are judged to have been \$50 billion (p 72). Many Argentine firms, not only small and medium-sized ones, but also major ones, declared bankruptcy. The main loss from the economic policy of the military regime was sustained by the international banks, the leading foreign monopolies and the elite of Argentina's financial and commercial bourgeoisie. As the work emphasizes, the situation which developed in Argentina created opportunities for enormous abuses. For example, out of \$40 billion in foreign debts, \$10 billion simply disappeared. (p 64). In evaluating the monetarist course of the military regime, the authors draw the conclusion: "The neoliberal economic policy not only was anathematized by the majority of the population but also became politically unacceptable for the greater part of the military" (p 62).

The policy of an "open economy" also led to sharply negative results in Chile, where the USA actively imposed the ideas of neomonetarism. As long ago as 1955 the University of Chicago and the Catholic University of Chile signed an agreement on the basis of which a large group of Chilean economists trained at Chicago. P. O'Brien emphasizes the active role of the "Chicago school" in the subversive activities of the reaction against the Popular Unity government. He writes, "The study of the activities of the main groups which organized the military coup in Chile reveals the important role of the "Chicago chaps" (p 150).

After Pinochet seized power, the leading representatives of the "Chicago school," M. Friedman, A. Harberger and F. Hayek, became the main sources of inspiration for the economic policy of the military-fascist junta. In no other Latin American country were the recommendations of the "Chicago school" carried out on such a scale as in Chile. The state sector was almost completely eliminated. Out of 464 firms and organizations which were under state control in September 1973, 364 had been transferred to private hands by June 1977 (many of them were sold for a song; the state earnings amounted to a more than modest sum--only \$434.3 million), while the rest went into the private sector for the most part by June 1980 (p 166). The process of enrichment for the ruling elite acquired enormous scale. According to O'Brien's evidence, "two or three leading financial groups seized dominating positions in the Chilean economy. They accounted for the bulk of all foreign loans" (p 165).

The neomonetarist course in Chile, as in other Southern hemisphere countries, did not ensure the resolution of economic and social problems; on the

contrary, it made even more acute the basic socio-economic contradictions. It led to an increase in unemployment, the further polarization of wealth and poverty, the growth of the foreign debt, and a reduction in accumulation. These contradictions, which were intensified by the economic drop in the centers of capitalism, led to the unprecedented economic crisis of 1982-1985, which manifested itself in the sharp drop in the GNP, in industrial production, and in foreign trade turnover.

In judging the work of the English specialists on Latin America, it should be recognized that the book undoubtedly makes a positive contribution to the critical interpretation of the policy of the Latin American military regimes and makes it possible to more fully understand the sources of the turn toward the democratization of political life.

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LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

BOOK ON SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA REVIEWED

Moscow LATINSKAYA AMERIKA in Russian No 11, Nov 86 pp 126-127

[Review by V.A. Galichin of book "Strany tsentralnoy ameriki: tendentsii ekonomicheskogo i sotsialno-politicheskogo razvitiya" [The Countries of Central America: Economic and Socio-Political Development Trends], editor-in-chief V.V. Volskiy, corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow, "Nauka", 1968, 336 pages]

[Text] The monograph under review, prepared by a collective of staff members at the USSR Academy of Sciences IIA (Institute of Latin America) under the editorship of V.V. Volskiy, V.I. Morozov, Yu.G. Onufriyev and M.L. Chumakova, represents a comprehensive study of the complex processes of social development in five Central American states: Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 70's and early 80's.

The first section of the work shows convincingly that the basis of the present-day conflict in Central America is a profound structural crisis, which reflects both the general tendencies in the development of capitalist society as well as the specific national features of Central American reality. "The essence of the social conflict," the book emphasizes, "lies in the collision between the objective possibilities (accumulated over a long historical period) for the development of the nation and the people (i.e. the level of production forces) and the structure of social relations (types of production, forms of exploitation, and systems for the management of socio-economic and political life)" (p 70).

The second part of the book provides a description of the liberation process in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, where the struggle of the revolutionary forces against imperialism and the local reaction has become especially acute. In this section the chapter about the heroic struggle of the Nicaraguan people against the Somoza dictatorship deserves particular attention. Influenced by the victory of the Nicaraguan patriots, the revolutionary and democratic forces of El Salvador and Guatemala have made significant advances in consolidating the leftist organizations and movements; this has enabled them to attract to their side new representatives of various social strata and to achieve important successes in the struggle against the reaction and the oligarchy. A concretely historical approach, citations from a wealth of factual material and the broad utilization of numerous original

sources have given the authors the opportunity to acquaint the reader with various aspects of the struggle of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan peoples.

The section which exposes the attempts to carry out reformist plans for the purpose of overcoming the structural crisis in Costa Rica and Honduras occupies an important place. The authors come to two conclusions. In the first place, reformist models of development and "liberalization" are not capable "either of resolving economic problems or of easing and eliminating class contradictions"; nor can they lead to political stability given the continued dependence of this region's countries and direct U.S. interference in their internal affairs. In the second place, reformism in all of its numerous forms represents an alternative to the revolutionary forces, and under the specific conditions of Central America it plays into the hands of imperialism and the reaction.

The work under review possesses unbought merits, which include the use of rich factual material and a high level of analysis of the problems under consideration. It is of interest not only to specialists but also to a wide range of readers. At the same time the book has certain inadequacies. For example, the international isolation of the Somoza dictatorship in the late 70's is presented by the authors as purely the result of the solidarity with the Nicaraguan people expressed by democratic and progressive forces (p 111). Inadequate treatment is given to the diverse and fruitful foreign policy activity of the Sandinistas; for the most part there is nothing analogous to it in the Latin American revolutionary movement. In addition, the political processes in Costa Rica, as well as the role and place of the leftist organizations in them, should have been discussed in more detail. There are a number of factual inaccuracies in the names of certain organizations. The book provides a definite summary of the research into the socio-political and economic problems of Central America and sets out certain new and promising directions for further work in this area.

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UN LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION MEETING IN MEXICO CITY

Moscow LATINSKAYA AMERIKA in Russian No 11, Nov 86 pp 133-135

[Article by A.N. Borovkov: "The 21st ECLA Session: Prospects for the Development of the Region"]

[Text] The 21st session of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLA) took place in April 1986 in the Mexican capital. Thirty-three members of the commission, [1] as well as a delegation from the Antilles Islands, which has associate member status, were represented at the level of economic ministers. The following were present as observers from the socialist countries: representatives from the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Vietnamese People's Republic, the Korean People's Republic, the Socialist Republic of Romania, the USSR, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. From the capitalist countries the observers included representatives from Austria, Australia, Belgium, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Norway, New Zealand, Turkey, the Philippines, Finland, FRG, Switzerland and Japan. Delegates from a number of international organizations, including CEMA and the EEC, also participated in the work of the session.

The agenda included such questions as prospects for the development of the Latin American and Caribbean countries up to the end of the 80's; the policy of stabilization, structural transformations and increases in economic activity; cooperation among the region's countries; the use of water resources; the problems of urbanization; and the plan for ECLA's work in the 1988-1989 period.

The documents of the session and the presentations by participants provided a description of the current stage at which the Latin American and Caribbean countries of Latin find themselves. Specifically, it was noted that a sharp reduction in the rate of GNP growth had taken place during the 80's. In the 70's this growth amounted to an average of 5.5 percent annually. If we exclude Brazil, which managed "to stay afloat," the GNP growth throughout the region amounts to a total of 0.8 percent. From 1981 through 1985 per capita production fell by an average of 9 percent. In a number of countries this level was much greater: in Bolivia it was 28 percent, in El Salvador 24 percent, in Venezuela, Haiti, Uruguay, Argentina and Guatemala it was from 18

to 22 percent, while in Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica it was from 11 to 15 percent.

Given the high rate of population growth, the drop in production has exacerbated the problem of unemployment. The number of totally and partly unemployed in the region amounts to about 110 million people. This problem has become particularly acute in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Honduras, Uruguay and Venezuela.

In the last five years the real wages for working people fell 7 percent in Costa Rica and Chile, 12 percent in Uruguay, 27 percent in Mexico and 43 percent in Peru.

By the end of 1985 the foreign debt of the region's countries had reached \$368 billion. Interest payments on the debts grew from \$6.9 billion in 1977 to \$39 billion in 1984. The debt crisis was made substantially worse by the reduction in exports which was caused by an increase in protectionism on the part of the developed capitalist countries, as well as by a drop in prices for the traditional export commodities. The documents of the session point out that due to the non-equivalent exchange alone, the region lost \$15 billion in 1985.

A detailed analysis of the situation led the participants in the 21st ECLA session to the conclusion that the first half of the 80's was lost for the economic development of the Latin American states, and given the existing conditions, the subsequent five-year period will not save it either. In the opinion of ECLA's executive secretary, Norberto Gonzalez, not all of the region's countries will succeed in reaching the 1980 per capita production level by 1990.

Overcoming the crisis in the centers of capitalism, the session noted, will not by any means lead automatically to an improvement of the situation at the periphery. The crisis is structural and requires serious re-organization of the economic mechanism. There is specific evidence of this in the negative results of the "stabilization programs" which are being carried out under IMF pressure: they call for a reduction in imports, the re-orientation of the national economy toward the foreign market, etc. The debt load has not only not eased, it has, on the contrary, increased. The region's states are no longer in a position to sacrifice economic development for the sake of an unattainable goal--the repayment of the foreign debt. At the same time, it was noted that financial obligations can be fulfilled only if there is stable economic growth.

Recently the capitalist countries have more or less agreed to this. As part of its attempts to seize the initiative, the USA proposed the not-unfamiliar "Baker plan" in October 1985.

The session in fact rejected this plan, noting that it contains conditions which limit the sovereign right of the Latin American states to utilize foreign credits in the national interests, while the amount of "aid" is far from the real needs of the debtors. It is essential to have a comprehensive

solution, which would stipulate the re-organization of the entire system of international currency-financial and trade-economic relations.

According to the concrete proposals adopted by the session it is essential to do the following: amend the debt obligations in accordance with the real ability of the debtor nations to pay; establish in certain cases a limit on export earnings directed toward debt repayment; lower bank interest rates to a normal level; increase the inflow into the region of new loan funds, including funds from international financial organizations, on preferential conditions; eliminate protectionist barriers to export commodities, and establish for them firm, higher prices.

One of the most important recommendations was to hold a new round of multilateral negotiations between creditors and debtors to work out balanced international agreements. For this purpose plans were made to hold an extraordinary ECLA session to be held in December 1986 in Mexico.

The session devoted a great deal of attention to the establishment of regional and inter-regional trade and economic cooperation. A number of concrete recommendations were made on this question.

It is important to note that the opportunity to achieve the set targets was linked to the problem of restraining the arms race and creating a firm basis for the peaceful development of the Latin American countries. The Mexican president, Miguel de la Madrid, in particular pointed this out. The session came out in favor of the peaceful settlement of the Central American conflict, seeing in it the main obstacle to overcoming the crisis in the subregion.

The conclusions reached by the session participants coincide in a number of cases with those which were formulated at the international conference on foreign debt by representatives of the political and public circles of the region's countries, which took place in Havana in the summer of 1985. This provides evidence of some radicalization in the position of certain Latin American governments. In the course of the session a growing polarization of forces between Latin America and the USA was displayed. Conflicts existed on both procedural questions and on the essence of the problems which were being discussed. The United States put itself in opposition to the region even before the official opening of the session, when it opposed the admittance of Cuban and Nicaraguan representatives to its working organs on the grounds that these countries are "not in a position to make a constructive contribution to the resolution of problems being experienced by the free world." However, all the Latin American countries (with no exceptions) voted for the head of the Cuban delegation to be the second deputy at the session's plenary meetings and the leader of the Nicaraguan delegation to be the first deputy chairman of the committee on urbanization problems. Thus the USA found itself isolated even before the start of the discussion on the agenda's main questions.

At the session U.S. Assistant Secretary of State A. Keys put forward a program calling for the privatization of the economy in the region's countries, further reduction in the state sector, an increase in the role of the multinational corporations, liberalization of foreign trade, etc. Many forum participants criticized the proposals harshly, emphasizing the important

role of the state sector in overcoming the crisis. The amendments and comments made by the American delegation to the draft resolution "Consequences and Prospects for the Foreign Indebtedness of the Latin American and Caribbean Countries" were rejected by a majority vote.

In general, it can be said that, despite the inconsistency of positions taken on a number of the issues which were discussed, the 21st ECLA session contributed to a deeper understanding of the need to re-organize the system of international economic relations, especially those concerning currency and credit.

FOOTNOTES

1. Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Great Britain, Venezuela, Guyana, Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Spain, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Netherlands, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, El Salvador, Surinam, the USA, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, France, Chile, Ecuador and Jamaica.

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LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

UNESCO'S ACTIVITIES (WITH SOVIET SUPPORT) IN LATIN AMERICA

Moscow LATINSKAYA AMERIKA in Russian No 11, Nov 86 pp 135-138

[Article by I.I. Kucherenko: "UNESCO and Latin America"]

[Text] Forty years ago, on 4 November 1946, the UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Charter went into effect. Many Latin American countries have shown great interest in its activities since its very early days and have taken an active part in the fulfillment of its program. At the present time 33 states of Latin America and the Caribbean are members of UNESCO (21 percent of all the member countries in the organization), and it has become a major international forum of the UN system. Their role and place in UNESCO is reflected in the fact that this region accounts for 9 out of 51 seats on the Executive Council, the highest organ in the period between sessions of the General Conference.

UNESCO activities in the Latin American countries are diverse and help them in the resolution of essential problems, ranging from the planning and development of educational systems and the preservation of the cultural heritage to concrete projects in narrowly technical areas (for example, drilling methods as part of search for geothermal sources in Mexico; research into vulcanology in Ecuador, petrography in Brazil and the use of computer equipment and production of foodstuffs in Cuba).

A network of bureaus which encompass all the areas of this organization's activities has been established to prepare and carry out various UNESCO projects. For example, the Regional Education Bureau is located in Santiago, the Regional Science and Technology Bureau is in Montevideo, and the Regional Culture Bureau is in Havana, while the Bureau of the Regional Adviser on Communications operates in Quito. In addition, most of the countries have accredited UNESCO representatives who consult with governments on all questions related to obtaining help through its channels.

In the area of education a broad program is being implemented, which includes assistance in the development of national plans to eliminate illiteracy and to train teaching personnel. This work has great significance because the region had more than 15.3 percent illiteracy among those 15 years and older bracket (43.6 million people) in 1985. With the support of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, UNESCO in the early 80's undertook to carry out a major

project with the goal of eliminating illiteracy in this region of the world by the year 2000.

Some Latin American countries have already achieved substantial success. Proof of this can be seen in the 1979 presentation of the N.K. Krupskaya prize, established by the Soviet government, to the Popular Alliance of Women of Peru for helping women to return to school and in 1981 to the Federation of Cuban Women for participating in the mass campaign to spread literacy in Cuba.

Nor can we fail to note that UNESCO, with the support of the socialist countries, has taken the initiative in recruiting the world community to grant material aid to carry out a campaign to eliminate illiteracy in Nicaragua, having called upon all governments, state and private organizations to display "active solidarity with liberated Nicaragua." The Soviet Union has donated to Nicaragua school textbooks and equipment worth a significant sum, and this has been a serious help in the expansion of that country's elementary education system.

Vocational and technical education is allotted an important place in the regional plans. Of great significance in this regard is the fulfillment of an experimental plan in which a number of Latin American states are participating. Its purpose is to develop new methods of training technical personnel, both those who study full time and those who work at the same time. This is also the target of a plan for the development of vocational-technical education, which involves nine countries in the Eastern region of the Caribbean.

In 1981-1983 the financial aid allotted by UNESCO to the development of the educational system in the region amounted to \$13.4 million, or approximately 10 percent of the amount allotted for these purposes throughout the world.

In the scientific sphere UNESCO's activities of recent years have been directed toward helping the developing states in their struggle to free themselves from scientific and technical dependence and in the utilization of scientific and technical achievements to resolve their essential tasks. The problems facing the Latin American countries in the sphere of training scientific personnel and the application of the results of scientific research are being partially resolved within the framework of UNESCO's inter-governmental programs, including the International Program of Geological Correlation, the International Hydrological Program, the "Man and the Biosphere" (MAB) program and the program of the Inter-governmental Oceanographic Commission. The projects which are being carried out within the framework of these programs have helped in evaluating the natural potential of the region and in utilizing it rationally.

Within the MAB framework there are 36 projects which are being carried out on problems of ecology, the utilization of tropical and subtropical forests, land utilization and the degradation of lands in semi-arid and mountainous regions, and population migration. We should mention first of all a project of continental significance on the rational utilization and conservation of water

resources in rural regions and an inter-regional plan on the comprehensive management of coastal eco-systems.

UNESCO carries out diverse work in the area of culture. The implementation of projects on the study of local languages, the revival of popular traditions and the development of folklore contributes to this in no small degree. Serious work is being carried out on the preservation and restoration of cultural monuments; they are being inventoried. In Cusco (Peru) UNESCO annually organizes courses for specialists on the protection of architectural monuments, archeological ruins and works of ancient art. Scholars with world-wide reputations teach these courses.

The Convention on the Protection of the World-Wide Cultural and Natural Legacy, adopted by UNESCO in 1972, was a very important beginning in the area of cultural cooperation. A list of culturally significant monuments includes both a number of individual buildings as well as whole cities and regions of Latin America. They include Old Havana and its fortifications, the historic city center of Olinda (Brazil), the Galapagos Islands, Quito (Ecuador), Cartagena (Colombia) and the Tikal National Reserve (Guatemala). Soviet specialists are participating actively with their Cuban colleagues in projects to restore the architecture of Old Havana.

Since 1983 well-known historians and scholars have been involved in a project to prepare a history of Latin America and the Caribbean. This work should be an objective evaluation of the historical processes in the region and the contribution of its peoples to world civilization. The work being carried out will make it possible to acquaint the world community on a broad scale with the cultural heritage of this region.

Important work is taking place in the area of information, which has acquired greater scope since 1976, when UNESCO joined a study on the establishment of a new international information order and the development of the basic principles for the dissemination of information. At the initiative of the Soviet Union and with the support of the socialist and developing countries, the UNESCO General Conference adopted in 1978 a Declaration of Basic Principles on the Role of the Mass Information Media in Strengthening Peace and International Understanding and in the Struggle Against Racism and Apartheid. This document, like the International Program for the Development of Communications developed in 1980, has become an important aid in the struggle for a new international information order based on just principles.

In order for Latin America to be able to free itself from the dominance of the Western information agencies, a Latin American special information services agency and a Caribbean news agency have been established with UNESCO assistance. Plans call for them to be equipped with a satellite communications system.

Along with concrete work on the resolution of urgent problems of cooperation among states in the area of education, science, culture and information, UNESCO by the 80's had developed a whole series of documents in which the basic principles of cooperation based on equal rights and mutual advantage are set out. It is participating ever more actively in the search for a way to

resolve today's most acute problems, on which depend not the only scientific and cultural progress of mankind but also the very existence of world civilization. In opposing the threat to the destruction of cultural valuables as a result of military actions or military occupation, UNESCO has more than once raised its voice in the defense of peace, and for the right of every people to build a life according to its own will. Specifically, in 1985 a UNESCO international jury awarded the Simon Bolivar prize to the "Contadora Group" in recognition of its efforts aimed at searching for ways to settle the Central American situation peacefully.

This UNESCO position runs counter to the policy of the aggressive circles headed by the USA, which has started an attack against the work of the UN and its specialized agencies in defense of peace and in the interests of broad international cooperation. Having failed in its attempts to draw UNESCO away from promoting the resolution of humanity's global problems, the USA and Great Britain (joined by Singapore) left the organization, trying in this way to undermine the entire system of international cooperation which was developed as a result of the victory of the peoples in the Second World War.

The 23d General Conference, which took place in Sofia in the fall of 1985, was a very important stage in the struggle to preserve UNESCO's positive course. It demonstrated the solidarity of the developing countries, including those in Latin America, in their aspiration to defend multilateral cooperation in the area of education, culture and information.

Among the Latin American countries Cuba takes a particularly active position; it provides decisive support for UNESCO's efforts aimed at the resolution of the urgent problems of the present. In Sofia the Cuban delegation made a significant contribution to the adoption of a number of general political resolutions calling for disarmament, detente in international relations and support for the activities of the "Contadora group." Cuba also made a large contribution to the success achieved, despite the attempts by the Western powers to remove as much as possible of the social-political subject matter from UNESCO activities, in preserving all the most important programs, including ones such as the "Analysis of World Problems and Future Research," "Peace, International Understanding, the Rights of Man and the Rights of Peoples," etc.

The Sofia session, despite the maneuvers by imperialist circles, demonstrated the obvious desire of the peoples to strengthen UNESCO as an important link in the entire UN system, and it emphasized their interest in ensuring international security and broad mutually-beneficial cooperation.

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LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

SOVIET-AMERICAN SYMPOSIUM ON LATIN AMERICAN PROBLEMS HELD

Moscow LATINSKAYA AMERIKA in Russian No 11, Nov 86 pp 139-141

[Article by P.P. Yakovlev: "The 5th Soviet-American Symposium"]

[Text] The 5th Soviet-American Scientific Symposium on the problems of Latin America was held in Leningrad in 1986. A representative delegation from the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), which brings together several thousand U.S. specialists on the problems of the region, arrived to take part in it.

The delegation was headed by Cole Blasier, a professor at Pittsburgh University and LASA president. It included Michael Meyer, director of the Center for the Study of the Latin American Continent at the University of Arizona at Tucson; Jerry Ledman, director of the Center for Latin American Studies at Arizona State University at Tempe; Richard Fagan, a professor at Stanford University; Frederick Nann, professor at Portland University; Lars Shultz, professor at the University of North Carolina and Bryan Lavman, professor at the University of San Diego.

The Soviet delegation, which was headed by V.V. Volskiy, director of ILA (Institute of Latin America) and corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, consisted of a large group of Latin American specialists from Moscow and Leningrad, including staff members from ILA, IVI (Institute of General History), MSU (Moscow State University), LSU (Leningrad State University) and other organizations and institutions.

In his opening remarks to the symposium, V.V. Volskiy emphasized that the practice (started in 1981) of holding meetings of Soviet and American specialists on Latin American problems facilitates the exchange of opinions between scholars in the two countries and makes a contribution to the cause of peaceful cooperation and better mutual understanding of peoples.

The theme of the current symposium, "The Latin American Revolutions of the 20th Century," made it possible for Soviet and American colleagues to raise and discuss a broad range of important economic, social and political problems, to trace the main tendencies in the development of the revolutionary process in the region. The discussion, which was very disputatious, revealed substantial disagreement in the judgments passed on the various phenomena.

Nonetheless, it was useful, because, in the general opinion of the participants, it provided an opportunity to become acquainted with the methodology and research results of one's counterparts and to carry out a frank exchange of opinions on many current issues in Latin American studies.

F. Nann; L.L. Klochkovskiy (IIA), doctor of economic sciences; and B.M. Merin (IIA), doctor of historical sciences, presented reports on the first item on the symposium agenda, "Economic and Social Preconditions and Factors in the Latin American Revolutions." The discussion centered on questions of the nature and tendencies of the class struggle in the region's countries, and the role of the working class and other social forces in Latin American revolutions. In contrast to the position of the Soviet scholars, the growing role of the proletariat in the revolutionary-liberation movement was denied in the presentations by the American participants in the meeting. The American specialists claimed that in the movement's development it is not the element of class or the class struggle which has primary significance, but rather the political positions and activities of various social groups, especially young people. Speaking at the conclusion of the discussion, V.V. Volskiy emphasized that in the face of all of the complexity and inconsistency in the social processes taking place in Latin America, it is the class struggle which has decisive significance in their development.

On the second agenda item, "The Agrarian Question in Latin American Revolutions" (the presenters were B. Lavman and M.V. Kulakov (MGU), doctor of economic sciences) a lively discussion ensued concerning the role of the peasantry and the agricultural proletariat in the social life of the Latin American countries. Many participants in the discussion shared the opinion that under the present conditions it is incorrect to talk about the Latin American peasantry in general because the situation in the region's countries varies and each requires a specific scholarly analysis.

The difference in the positions of the Soviet and American scholars revealed itself with particular clarity during discussion of the subject "External Factors in the Latin American Revolutions," on which C. Blasier and P.P. Yakovlev (IIA), candidate of historical sciences, presented reports. In the course of the discussion it became clear that the question of external factors in the Latin American revolutions is one of the most complex and controversial problems of present-day Latin American studies, one which constantly provokes sharp conflicts between the different approaches and viewpoints.

The four subsequent sessions were devoted to the consideration of specific problems related to the major Latin American revolutions of the 20th century--the Mexican, Bolivian, Cuban and Nicaraguan.

M. Meyer and Yu.I. Vizgunova presented reports on the subject of the "Mexican Revolution in the Historical Context of Latin America." It was noted that the revolution of 1910-1917 was a pivotal stage in the history of Mexico, inasmuch as it undermined the dominance of the most reactionary faction of the bourgeois-large landowning oligarchy, inflicted a blow against precapitalist relations, raised the consciousness of the working masses to a higher level and created the conditions for the acceleration of the country's development. In the general opinion of the discussion participants, the revolution in

Mexico had regional significance; it exerted an influence on the course of the historical development of all the Latin American peoples.

"The Bolivian Revolution: Causes, Consequences, Lessons and Prospects," was the title of a report by James Wilkie, professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, who could not participate in the symposium personally. For this reason J. Ledman spoke on this subject for the American side and A.D. Ignatyev (IVI), candidate of historical sciences, spoke for the Soviet side. It was emphasized that the 1952 revolution was an important historical experience for the leftist forces of Bolivia; it exerted an influence on various circles of Bolivian society, including the military, in whose ranks a group of nationalistically-inclined officers was formed. During the discussion the American participants put forward the thesis that it was primarily the middle strata of the population who enjoyed the fruits of the revolution.

"Twenty-five Years of the Cuban Revolution: Social Aspects" was the subject heading under which papers by R. Fagan and A.D. Bekarevich (IIA), candidate of economic sciences, were discussed. Participating in the discussions on these papers were A.V. Yeliseyev (city of Leningrad), B. Lavman and V.V. Volskiy; the latter decisively rejected the idea of U.S. scholars that Cuba is "dependent" on the USSR, and he directed the attention of the symposium participants to the fundamentally different nature of the relations between capitalist countries and between states of the socialist alliance.

The discussion of the concluding subject of the symposium, "The Nicaraguan Revolution and International Relations" was extremely topical. L. Shultz and A.N. Glinkin (IIA), doctor of historical sciences, presented reports. In the course of the discussion the profound differences between the views of the American and Soviet colleagues showed themselves once again. Nonetheless, the symposium participants were unanimous in the view that it was essential to make every efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the situation centering on Nicaragua and in Central America in general. In this regard the efforts of the "Contadora group" were praised.

The symposium once again confirmed the wisdom and usefulness of meetings between Latin American specialists from the USSR and the USA, who, despite profound and serious differences, are objectively interested in continuing and developing the dialog between scholars of the two countries.

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SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

IZVESTIYA CITES AFRICAN PAPERS ON U.S. ORIGIN OF AIDS

Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 25 Jan 87 p 5

["AIDS--An American 'Present'"]

[Text] The press of a number of African countries has published articles about the noisy campaign now unleashed in the West with a view to discrediting the African countries as the disseminators of the disease AIDS. We reprint items from two newspapers today. Kenya's DAILY NATION comments on the decision of the British Defense Ministry to ban British servicemen in Kenya from visiting the coastal towns of Mombasa and Malindi while on leave because of the danger of being infected with AIDS there. Accra's GHANAIAN TIMES describes how and where the mortal AIDS first appeared.

DAILY NATION, Nairobi:

The majority of Africa's current misfortunes appeared on the continent thanks to the "endeavors" of the Western world. This first of all involves economic backwardness, unemployment, poverty, corruption and crime. The Western press is also writing about venereal disease and AIDS in Africa, as if these were invented by the Africans, while at the same time the majority of these diseases were brought in by the European colonizers.

The facts testify: AIDS first appeared not in Africa but in the United States, among homosexuals. Moreover, Great Britain, for example, is one of the few countries in the world where homosexuality is legalized by the state. However, the Western press, proceeding from racist positions, is trying to hush up these facts and places all the responsibility on Kenya.

Along with this, the information organs in the West do not write that among the huge stream of tourists from the U.S. and England in Kenya, it is completely possible that there are those with AIDS. It is namely Western tourists, particularly those from the U.S., England and West Germany, who transformed the coastal cities of Mombasa and Malindi into places for mobs of morally degraded people. It is none other than the American sailors from the nuclear powered aircraft carriers who systematically appear in the port of Mombasa, doing disgraceful things and insulting the national dignity of the Kenyans.

It is completely possible that the disease AIDS may have been introduced into the African continent, and into Kenya in particular, by envoys of the "free world" and therefore the Kenyan government has the right to ask

for the appropriate medical tests of foreigners from the West entering the country, as Great Britain is planning to do in relation to African citizens.

GHANAIAN TIMES, Accra:

It is well known that a small lie gives birth to a large one. The U.S. found itself in a similar situation, trying to shed itself of the responsibility for the appearance of the virus AIDS. The facts irrefutably testify that the birthplace of AIDS was not Africa, but the United States.

The deadly virus was invented in 1977 in the Pentagon laboratory for the study of biological warfare methods in Fort Detrick, Maryland, and then it was tested on criminals, sentence to long prison terms. As a result of the experiments, a quarter of the experimentees died while the rest were freed, having become carriers of the dangerous disease. Soon after this the first cases of AIDS were registered in New York. In West Europe the most frequent cases are in the areas where American troops are stationed. In Africa, which had not known this disease earlier, the dangerous virus was brought in by American tourists.

It is the fault of the Pentagon that AIDS has turned into a serious threat to the health and life of all people. Africa will never submit itself to the attempts of the U.S. to place the responsibility on her for the origin of this disease. The recent proposals of the U.S. health organs to test an AIDS vaccine on the inhabitants of Africa is nothing else than a regular attempt to whitewash Washington.

There are a million and a half AIDS carriers in the United States, however they want to test the vaccine on Africans so that if it is successful they can cure Americans. If the vaccine is not effective, Washington has nothing to fear, since all the victims will be Africans.

It is not excluded that the U.S. may already be carrying out secret, well concealed tests of a vaccine in a number of African countries, as is testified to by the drastic rise in the number of AIDS victims in Central and East Africa. The deadly virus is a U.S. creation. Therefore the OAU and the governments of the African countries must announce to Washington their decisive protest and call upon the U.S. to take responsibility for the criminal experiments with biological weapons.

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